

# **Skedaddle**

*CA-020-612*



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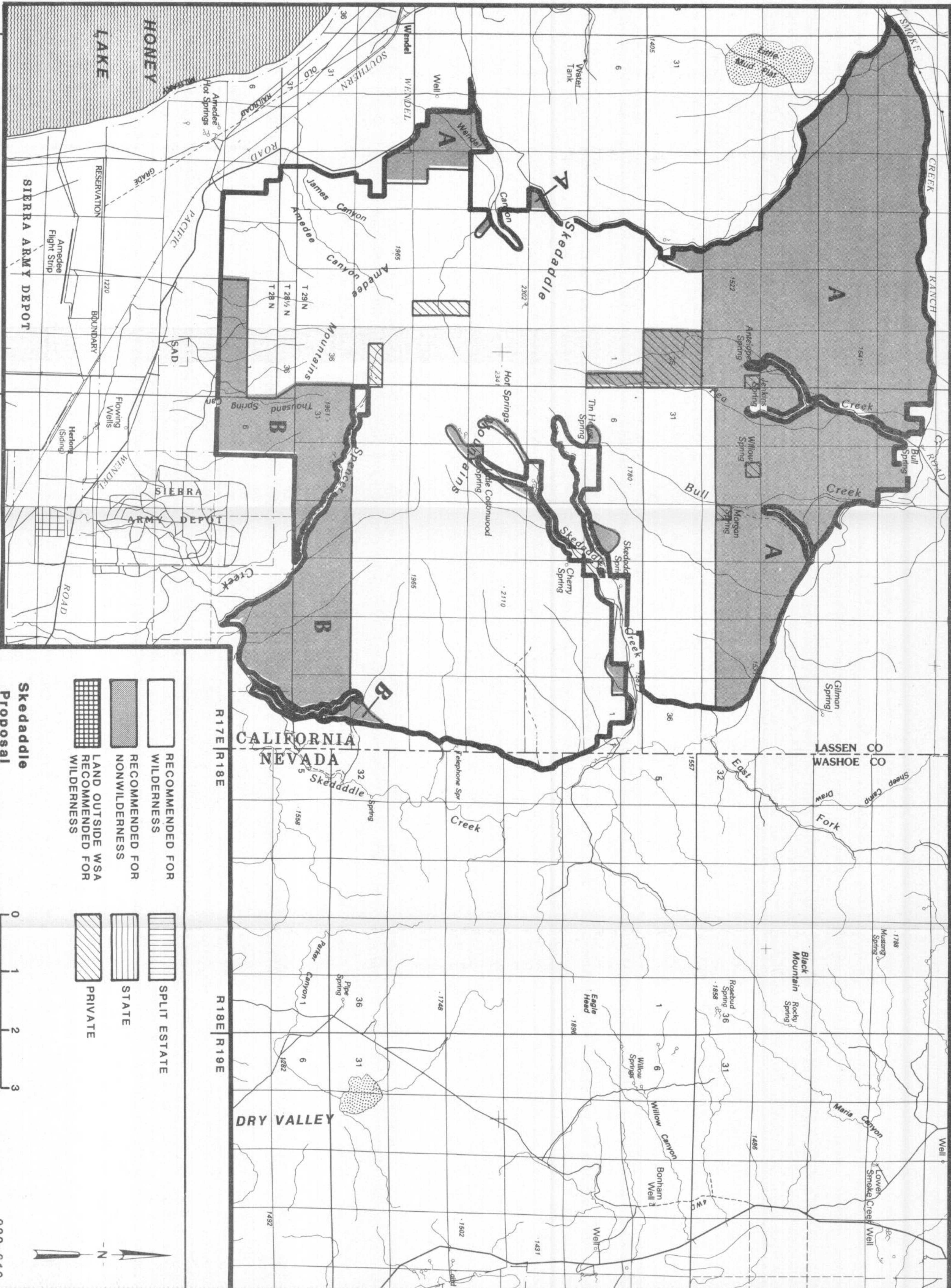
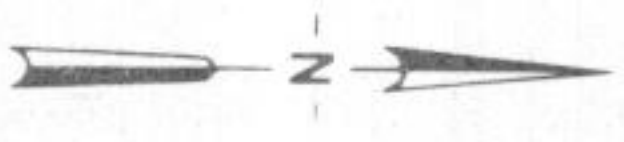
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Skedaddle  
Proposal  
MAP-1

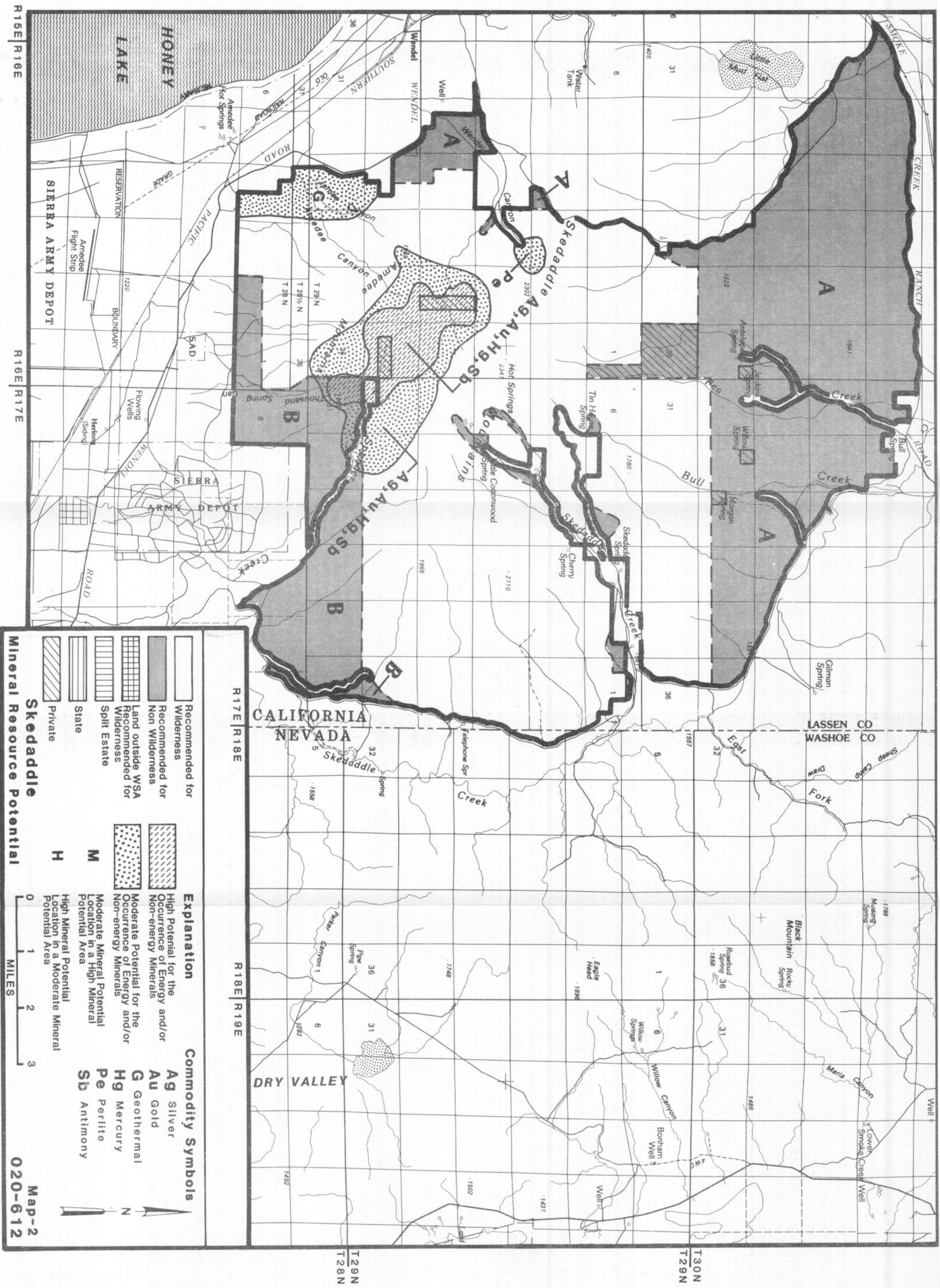
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020-612  
JUNE, 1988

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|--|---|--|--------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS                  |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS               |  | STATE        |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | PRIVATE      |









SKEDADDLE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-020-612)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

63,189 acres

The Skedaddle WSA is located in Lassen County, California (99.59%) and in Washoe County, Nevada (0.5%). The WSA contains 62,010 acres of BLM land and 1,179 acres of private land located in seven parcels varying in size from 40 to 640 acres (see Map 1 and Table 1). Cities nearest the WSA are Susanville, California, 30 miles west and Reno, Nevada, 70 miles south.

The unit is bounded on the west by the Bruebeck Springs Road, private land, and County Road 320. On the south, the boundary follows section lines to avoid toe slopes determined to be unnatural during the inventory due to numerous roads and gravel pits. In this area the boundary follows the section line extending east-west, south of T. 28 N., R. 16 E., sections 1,2,3,4 and T. 28 N., R. 17 E., section 6. Continuing eastward, the southern boundary extends north 1-1/2 miles and east 2 miles around the boundary of the Sierra Army Depot's demolition site withdrawal. On the east, the boundary follows the Spencer Creek and Skedaddle Roads and private land. On the north, the boundary follows Humboldt Wagon Road and private land.

The WSA is located on the northwestern edge of the arid Great Basin, characterized by eroded volcanic mountains and expansive desert valleys (the remains of ancient lake beds). The WSA comprises an area approximately 10 miles by 12 miles. The Skedaddle and Amedee Mountains located within the central and southern parts of the WSA are its dominant physical features. These peaks rise from adjacent dry lake beds and low sloping hills from elevations of 4,200 feet to the 7680-foot summit of Skedaddle Mountain.

The core area of the WSA is dominated by rugged vertical cliffs, canyons, peaks, and upland basins of the Skedaddle and Amedee Mountains. The higher Skedaddle elevations support scattered aspen groves and patches of large berry shrubs. The deep canyons support riparian vegetation (willows, wild rose, berry shrubs) and the upland basins, small grass meadows. The northern and eastern edges of the WSA are open, sagebrush-covered flats that develop into long, toe slopes of the Skedaddle Mountains. On the south and west, shorter and steeper toe slopes lead into Amedee Mountain. Sagebrush and bunch grass vegetation dominate the majority of the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four (4) different alternatives were analyzed in the Eagle Lake-Cedarville Final Wilderness EIS: partial wilderness, the proposed action, where 60% of the WSA would be designated wilderness, partial wilderness where (39%) of the WSA would be designated wilderness, all wilderness and no wilderness.

2. RECOMMENDATION RATIONALE ---

37,644	acres recommended for wilderness
24,366	BLM acres recommended for non-wilderness

Sixty percent partial wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. 24,366 acres in this WSA are released for uses other than wilderness. The suitable recommendation is conditional, on a qualifying statement being embodied in the enabling legislation, that wilderness designation would not impair the present or future mission of the Sierra Army Depot, which is vital to national security and local economic stability.

Within California 37,339 acres are recommended suitable and 24,366 acres are recommended non-suitable. Within Nevada 589 acres are recommended suitable.

The all-wilderness alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative because it would result in the least change from the existing natural environment over time. The selected alternative will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The 60% partial-wilderness recommendation for the Skedaddle Mountain WSA is based on the following rationale: (1) the lands proposed for wilderness possess very high quality wilderness values, while on lands not recommended for wilderness, these values are lower or resource conflicts occur, (2) the proposed wilderness can be managed to preserve wilderness qualities and (3) wilderness designation will not have a significant impact on land use occurring adjacent to the proposed wilderness, such as the Sierra Army Depot operations.

The area of the Skedaddle Mountain WSA recommended for wilderness contains outstanding wilderness qualities. The area is a rugged, mountainous land-form dissected by many steep, rocky canyons, cliffs and ridges. Opportunities for solitude are plentiful throughout the large topographically-diverse area. The area offers excellent opportunities for challenging primitive recreation in a rugged, natural setting. Hiking, backpacking, and wildlife observation, particularly opportunities for viewing birds of prey, are excellent. Many riparian areas, springs, and aspen groves add to the natural appeal of the recommended wilderness area. Outstanding scenic vistas are common from high points on the Skedaddle and Amedee ridgecrests. Because of the unique geographic location of Skedaddle Mountains, views of three major geologic provinces, the Cascades, the Great Basin and the Sierra Nevada, can be enjoyed from within the recommended wilderness area. The vistas of the undisturbed natural areas within the recommended wilderness and the vast expanse of geologically diverse land-forms beyond the WSA heighten the experience of isolation inherent in wilderness.

The area recommended for wilderness can be effectively managed to preserve wilderness qualities. Cliffs and steep, rocky terrain limit vehicle entry along the western and southern sides of the recommended wilderness. On the eastern and northern portions of the recommended wilderness, provision for vehicle access on two canyon-bottom cherrystemmed roads will provide for continued vehicle access to popular hunting areas within the Spencer and Skedaddle Creek drainages. Continued vehicle access into these areas should reduce the potential for vehicle entry into the wilderness areas along the more open slopes adjacent to the eastern boundary. Management to preserve wilderness would not be affected by two parcels of private land located within the core of the recommended wilderness area. One 120-acre parcel contains a small stock pond and is used for stock watering. Continued stock watering will not affect management of the area as wilderness. The parcel is accessible via a cherrystemmed road that accesses an adjacent property owned by the same landowner. The second parcel, 160 acres, is undeveloped and is located in Little Spencer Basin within the core of the recommended wilderness. Steep slopes and difficult access over a very rocky cherrystemmed road and across 1-1/2 miles of grass and brush-covered slopes within the recommended wilderness, limit development potential of this parcel. It is unlikely that this parcel would be developed and therefore, it is not expected that future use of this private parcel would cause adverse impacts to wilderness. Five other private parcels are located at the end of cherrystemmed roads that extend into the recommended wilderness area. These parcels are used for livestock watering and contain small stock ponds and developed springs. Continued use of these parcels for livestock watering and seasonal hunter camps is not expected to affect the preservation of wilderness qualities on adjacent lands recommended for wilderness and acquisition is not recommended.

Preservation of wilderness qualities within the recommended wilderness area would not be affected by mineral or geothermal resource development. Mineral values within the recommended wilderness area while present (seven perlite claims) are considered subeconomic and are not expected to be developed. Geothermal resource development is not expected on 830 acres of the Wendel Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) located within the recommended wilderness area because of low potential and high development costs related to very rough terrain. Alternate sites are available within the KGRA outside the recommended wilderness area where the geothermal resource is considered to have a higher potential and site development costs would be substantially less because of more favorable terrain.

Wilderness values are affected by operations at the Sierra Army Depot ammunition demolition facility located on military withdrawal land adjacent to the wilderness study area's south side. Ammunition detonations cause brief loud disturbances to solitude within the recommended wilderness area. While these activities disturb solitude within the WSA, the infrequent and brief impact of these activities do not affect solitude or other wilderness qualities to such an extent to warrant non-wilderness designation of an otherwise highly qualified area. This wilderness recommendation is based on the recognition that while the outside influences of the Sierra Army Depot's activities may vary widely with associated affects on solitude within the recommended wilderness, these impacts are temporary and transient.

Outstanding opportunities for rugged, challenging primitive recreation, high wildlife values that enhance wilderness experiences, natural characteristics throughout the heart of the WSA and, for the large majority of time, excellent opportunities for solitude all lead to the conclusion that this area qualifies for wilderness designation.

The BLM recognizes the Sierra Army Depot activities as legitimate uses of nearby land and recommends to local, State, and Federal authorities that there be no impairment of Depot activities because of wilderness designation. BLM recommends that Congress review the situation concerning the proximity of Sierra Army Depot prior to drafting the legislation, and make findings that would allow the continuing and potential expansion of operations on the Sierra Army Depot. If designated as wilderness, the Sierra Army Depot would be directly involved in the development of a wilderness management plan for the Skedaddle Mountains.

This wilderness recommendation carries with it a non-wilderness recommendation for a one mile wide area that surrounds the Depot's military withdrawal land. This area coincides with Lassen County's public safety zone designation around the depot demolition facility land. This area, combined with one to two miles of military withdrawal land located between the withdrawal boundary and the actual demolition grounds, provides a zone two to three miles wide between the recommended wilderness area and the demolition site. Topographic relief provides physical, visual and audible screening of most of the recommended wilderness area from the demolition site.

Past regular BLM use (hunting, and hiking) on public lands adjacent to the demolition facility have not resulted in any reported problems by area visitors, nor has such use generated requests by depot management to extend the safety zones.

Hunting for deer and chukar are popular uses of the recommended wilderness area and these activities can continue under wilderness designation. The recommended wilderness area boundaries were developed to insure that all existing major vehicle access routes into the Skedaddle WSA remain open to motorized vehicle use with the expressed purpose of providing access to popular hunting areas. Cherrystemmed roads extend up Spencer and Skedaddle Creek and into Wendel Canyon. Access to other popular hunting areas is possible from boundary roads and on 39 miles of vehicle ways that will remain open in the non-wilderness area. Eight miles of vehicle access ways would be closed to protect wilderness values of naturalness and solitude in the recommended wilderness area.

Areas not recommended for wilderness have lower wilderness values characterized by common uninteresting landscapes, management difficulties and resource conflicts. Area A, located north and west of the Skedaddle Mountains, which is not recommended for wilderness, has generally broad and flat to gradually sloping terrain. While opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are present in these areas, the areas lack the topographic variety, scenic interest and high wildlife values that contribute to the higher quality wilderness experiences present within

recommended wilderness area. The non-wilderness areas offer limited appeal for hiking, backpacking, sightseeing and camping. Resource conflicts in the non-wilderness area north of Skedaddle Mountain are with motorized use associated with hunting access and the need for a future utility corridor along an existing underground telephone line that parallels the WSA's northern boundary. Motorized use of this area for hunting access to lands within the core of the WSA is the main public use of the area. Wilderness designation would prevent access through this area and significantly reduce hunting use of the core areas of the WSA.

Approximately eight miles along the WSA's northern side have been identified by the utility industry as needed for a high priority potential utility corridor. This area is one of the last remaining areas that can provide an east-west utility corridor through Northern California. No construction is planned at this time, but the alignment is considered necessary for development of future power corridors. This potential non-wilderness use of the WSA's northern side was also deemed a more important use of the area than wilderness designation of an area of nondescript wilderness qualities.

Area B located south and east of Amedee Mountain which is recommended non-wilderness coincides with a one-mile public safety zone surrounding the Sierra Army Depot's military withdrawal where ammunition detonation occurs. Non-wilderness is recommended in support of the intent of this designation. The area on the southeastern corner of the WSA adjacent to the public safety zone is recommended non-wilderness because it is located downwind of the Sierra Army Depot demolition site. Prevailing westerly winds carry dissipating smoke and dust clouds over this area.



TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>			<u>Acres</u>
	<u>CA</u>	<u>NV</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
BLM (surface and subsurface)	61,422	589	62,010
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0	0	0
Inholdings			
State	0	0	0
Private	1,179	0	1,179
Total	62,601	589	63,189
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>			<u>Acres</u>
	<u>CA</u>	<u>NV</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
BLM (within WSA)	37,055	589	37,644
BLM (outside WSA)	0	0	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0	0	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0	0	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	37,055	589	37,644
Inholdings <sup>1</sup>			
State	0	0	0
Private	283	0	283
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>			<u>Acres</u>
	<u>CA</u>	<u>NV</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
BLM (surface and subsurface)	24,366	0	24,366
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0	0	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	24,366	0	24,366

<sup>1</sup>Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.



3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness:

The Skedaddle WSA appears natural throughout. In the area recommended for wilderness designation, rugged cliffs, steep slopes, numerous ridges and canyons of the Amedee and Skedaddle Mountains bear the weathered imprint of natural change unaffected by man. Native grass, shrub and riparian species contribute to the natural appearance of this area. Scattered, small aspen groves on the northern slope of Skedaddle Mountain further add to the natural appeal of the area. The area not recommended for wilderness, although not as rugged topographically, is also natural in appearance and is populated by native grass and shrub species.

Unnatural man-made features do occur within both the area recommended for wilderness and the area not recommended for wilderness. Within the area recommended for wilderness designation, man-made features consist of 8 developed springs, 16 small (1 acre or less) stock ponds, 1.5 miles of four-strand wire fence, and 8 miles of access ways. The stock ponds are located in drainages along the northern and eastern slopes of the area recommended for wilderness. Most developed springs are located in the Skedaddle and Spencer Creek drainages. Three wildlife guzzlers (water catchments), 10' X 20', are also located within the recommended suitable area.

These man-made facilities are small, low profile developments that have little impact on the appearance of naturalness in the adjacent areas and in the WSA as a whole. Stock ponds are located in the bottom of drainages and are visually screened by adjacent ridges and nearby slopes. Natural revegetation of stock pond dams limits the visibility of most of these structures to small areas immediately around facilities. Fences blend into the surrounding landscape because they are visually small objects that are hard to distinguish in the surrounding mosaic of brush, grasses and rock. Access ways are little more than two-wheel tracks through the brush and are generally located in the bottom of drainages where brush and adjacent ridges effectively shield them from all but immediate view.

In the area not recommended for wilderness designation, there are 7 developed springs, 15 small (one acre or less) stock ponds, 4.5 miles of wire fence and 39 miles of access ways. As in the area recommended for wilderness, these man-made features blend into the landscape and do not affect the appearance of naturalness beyond the immediate area surrounding each facility. Naturalness was not a significant factor in deleting the portion of the WSA not recommended for wilderness.



Detonation and burning of ammunition and other materials at the Sierra Army Depot's demolition facility on the southern flank of the Amedee Mountains two miles south of the WSA, causes smoke clouds that occasionally drift over the WSA and affect naturalness. The extent of the impact depend upon the wind direction, type of ammunition detonated, and frequency of detonation (usually single to multiple detonations within a one-hour period in mid-afternoon). Prevailing westerly winds usually carry the majority of cloud drift east of the WSA, but drift of dissipating clouds over the WSA does occur.

## 2. Solitude

The area of Skedaddle WSA recommended for wilderness designation offers excellent opportunities for experiencing solitude. Numerous rugged canyons, ridges and mountain-rimmed upland basins provide ample opportunities for isolation. Within Amedee, James, Skedaddle and Spencer Creek Canyons, Big and Little Spencer Basins, as well as within the many unnamed canyons that comprise the balance of the recommended wilderness area, rugged topography provides both visual and audial screening, shielding visitors one from another as well as from the influences of activities outside the WSA. Area A, within the area not recommended for wilderness (see Map 1), is characterized by level to gently sloping terrain. This area has little topographic variation to provide visual screening and isolation of visitors. While opportunities for experiencing solitude in this area west and north of the area recommended for wilderness are present, the opportunities are not as good as within the area recommended for wilderness.

Within Area B, also not recommended for wilderness, there are excellent opportunities for solitude, except during brief periods when detonations from Sierra Army Depot's ammunition demolition facility temporarily disturb solitude with loud explosive blasts. These vary from single to multiple explosions usually occurring within a one-hour period in mid-afternoon. Frequency of detonations varies with Sierra Army Depot's workload and weather conditions. Detonations do not always occur on a daily basis. This area is topographically diverse, and as with adjacent areas recommended for wilderness, offers excellent opportunities for solitude. Disturbance to solitude by demolition activities was not the principal reason for deletion of this area from the recommended wilderness.

Throughout most of the year, human activities have little impact on solitude within the WSA. Livestock operators travel on existing roads and ways and occasional visits from hikers and horseback riders are seasonal and infrequent. During fall hunting season, however, solitude is temporarily disturbed by hunter activity. An estimated 4200 visitor-days of hunter use occur within the WSA, mainly from mid-October through mid-November during deer season and the first 4 weeks of Chukar season.



Solitude is disturbed by hunter vehicle use on 18 miles of cherrystemmed roads that extend within the WSA and on 47 miles of access ways that also are within the WSA. However, most of this solitude disturbing activity occurs on 10 miles of cherrystemmed roads and 39 miles of access ways located outside the area recommended for wilderness. Within the area recommended for wilderness, hunter vehicle use is concentrated within narrow canyons (where popular access roads have been cherrystemmed out of the recommended wilderness) or on peripheral boundary roads. Vehicle noise is confined within the canyons where the cherrystemmed roads are located or is limited to the outer periphery of the recommended wilderness where vehicle noise has little affect on solitude.

Other impacts to solitude within the recommended wilderness area from outside activities result from periodic military helicopter security flights around the depot demolition facility adjacent to the WSA's south side and from jet aircraft take-off and landing at the Sierra Army Depot airstrip 2-1/2 miles south of the WSA. Helicopter flights are intermittent and have temporary impacts on solitude. Frequency of flights vary widely and is dependent upon military shipments (transports) and training schedules (fighter aircraft). Impacts to solitude are temporary loud engine sounds, mainly noticeable on south-facing slopes.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

### 3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The area recommended for wilderness designation affords exceptional opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The Amedee and Skedaddle Mountains are dissected by a myriad of steep and narrow canyons that provide challenging hiking/exploration opportunities. Jagged cliffs, caves, and volcanic spires abound on the west face of the Amedee Mountain (known locally as Wendel Cliffs). Skedaddle ridgecrest and its three peaks, along with many other unnamed canyons, ridges and peaks provide enticing goals for day hikers or backpackers. Between the crests of Amedee and Skedaddle Mountains lie Big and Little Spencer Basins. These ridge-rimmed basins afford visitors isolated camping experiences in the heart of the WSA.

An integral part of the primitive recreation experience within the core of Skedaddle WSA are the expansive vistas gained when atop the 7,680-foot height of Skedaddle Mountain. For those who make the climb, a panorama of land forms spreads before them: to the south and east, multiple mountain ranges and dry lake bed valleys

of the Great Basin Desert; to the north and west, volcanic peaks of the Cascade Range rising above the Modoc Plateau; and to the southwest, the wall-like escarpment of the granitic Sierra Nevada's northernmost reaches, reflecting across the waters of Honey Lake at the foot of the Skedaddles. These vistas are unique to the Skedaddle Mountain WSA because of its location at the junction of three major geologic provinces. Viewing these natural regional landforms from within an undisturbed wilderness heightens the primitive recreation experience unique to the Skedaddle Mountains.

Good opportunities for viewing wildlife also exist within the WSA and add to a primitive recreation experience. The area recommended for wilderness provides excellent habitat to a wide variety of nesting raptors (birds of prey). The numerous cliffs and good prey-base of the area support one of the largest populations of nesting golden eagles in the region. Deer and wild horses are also common and can frequently be seen. Because of the rugged topography, varied wildlife and geographic location, the area recommended for wilderness designation truly affords the visitor excellent opportunities for a wide variety of primitive recreational experiences.

Within the area not recommended for wilderness, parcel A is not well suited to primitive recreation. The flat to gently sloping terrain is uninteresting for hiking and backpacking and offers no challenging opportunities. No unique destination type attractions occur in these areas. It is likely that given the wide range of primitive recreation opportunities in the adjacent portions of the WSA, few if any people would choose to explore parcel A. Parcel B affords good opportunities for primitive recreation, particularly in Thousand Springs Canyon, and has regularly received use primarily by chukar hunters who hike the canyons and walk the slopes each fall.

#### 4. Special Features

This area does not contain any unique geological, biological or historic characteristics notable as special features.

### B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 62,010 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Sagebrush Steppe ecosystem. Wilderness designation of the Skedaddle WSA would not add a new ecosystem or landform to the NWPS. This WSA is in the Intermountain Sagebrush Province-Sagebrush Steppe desert ecosystem. At the present time, there are two existing wilderness areas (Jarbidge and South Warner) within this ecotype.



TABLE 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classifications Domain/Province/PNC	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain/Sagebrush/ Sagebrush Steppe	3	76,699	136	4,308,329
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain/Sagebrush/ Sagebrush Steppe	1	31,295	4	90,420
<u>NEVADA</u>				
Intermountain/Sagebrush/ Sagebrush Steppe	1	32,407	29	1,273,919

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: This WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated wilderness areas and other BLM wilderness study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

TABLE 3 - Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Chico	16	1,256,873	13	430,822
Redding	14	1,236,503	11	344,633
Sacramento	46	5,001,817	87	2,479,541
Yuba City	44	4,951,805	85	2,459,500
<u>Nevada</u>				
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809
<u>Oregon</u>				
Medford	31	2,440,081	21	730,038

### 3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The WSA is within a 50 air-mile radius of 6 BLM WSA's recommended for wilderness designation. The South Warner Wilderness, administered by the Modoc National Forest is the only designated wilderness area within 50 air miles of the Skedaddle Mountains.

#### C. Manageability

The entire WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, much more effort would be required to manage the area recommended as non-wilderness than the area recommended for wilderness for protection of wilderness qualities. The primary difference between the two areas would be the additional effort needed to control vehicle entry in the open terrain of the non-wilderness area. Within the area recommended for wilderness other existing or potential activities that affect or may affect management of the area as wilderness are: activities of the adjacent Sierra Army Depot's ammunition demolition facility, potential mining claim development, access to private land and potential geothermal development. These existing and potential activities warrant discussion because of their perceived impact on wilderness values within the WSA. However, upon examination, these activities do not have significant, lasting effects on wilderness values that would preclude management of the area as wilderness.

The area recommended for wilderness (see Map 1) is well suited for control of vehicle entry through a combination of natural terrain and visitor management features. Steep slopes and cliffs comprise most of the western and southern boundaries providing natural control of vehicle entry. Where the wilderness boundary follows boundary roads, a 300-foot setback is recommended to provide for motorized pull-offs, vehicle-based camping, and road maintenance. Cherrystemmed roads provide for vehicle access into the Spencer and Skedaddle Creek drainages, areas that have long been vehicle-accessible and popular for hunting. Provision of vehicle access on canyon-bottom, cherrystemmed roads to these two popular hunting areas within the recommended wilderness should reduce vehicle access pressure along that eastern boundary road and on 8 miles of access ways that will be closed within the recommended wilderness area. All boundaries along cherrystemmed roads in this recommendation include a 100-foot setback from each side of the cherrystemmed road to allow for off-road pull-off, vehicle-based camping and road maintenance.

On the eastern side of the recommended wilderness area, the boundary follows a 300-foot setback from the Skedaddle Road. The road provides an easily recognizable physical boundary feature in an area where arbitrary boundaries based on legal lines or contours would be difficult to distinguish in the field. The mountainous area west of the eastern boundary is entirely included in the recommended suitable area because it is a major portion of the Skedaddle Mountain block and contains excellent opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Management of the eastern boundary can be accomplished through signing



the only two entry points to the region, the north and south entrances to the Skedaddle Road and through periodic field patrol. On the north, the boundary follows legal lines in terrain where vehicle use is restricted by rocky surfaces and limited access. One vehicle-way will be closed and require periodic patrol checks.

Closure of eight miles of access ways at the recommended-suitable area boundaries will be feasible through a combination of terrain features, visitor information signs and field patrol during high use periods in the fall. Closure of these ways is necessary to maintain the wilderness qualities of solitude and naturalness in the recommended wilderness area.

In the areas not recommended for wilderness, vehicle access is possible along most boundary roads surrounding parcel A. Wilderness qualities in these areas, while present, are not as high value as within the recommended wilderness area and do not warrant the increased field patrol effort that would be necessary to prevent vehicle entry into these areas from along virtually all segments of the boundary roads. Most of Parcel B is not accessible to vehicles because of steep rocky slopes and could be managed as wilderness. Deletion of this parcel from wilderness was not, however, based on vehicle control considerations and instead on conformance with public safety zone around the Sierra Army Depot's demolition facility.

Management of the Skedaddle WSA as wilderness will be affected by the activities of the Sierra Army Depot which are discussed in this report under section 3.A., Wilderness Characteristics. Past activities of the Depot have caused brief, temporary disturbances to wilderness qualities of naturalness and solitude within the WSA. These activities occur intermittently and vary with military workloads, weather conditions, and training schedules. Future activities of the Sierra Army Depot are unknown. Substantial increase in demolition activities, aircraft flights or other as yet undetermined use of the military facility could increase impacts to wilderness qualities, particularly solitude, within the recommended wilderness area. The intensity and degree of ongoing military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the wilderness experience as well as the existing and future national defense mission.

These activities are outside the realm of Bureau of Land Management control and could constitute a manageability problem if activities on the Depot site occurred with sufficient frequency and duration so as to continually disrupt solitude within the recommended wilderness area. However, at this time, and in the foreseeable future, no such activities are expected that would disrupt solitude within the WSA so consistently as to preclude managing the area for protection of its wilderness values of naturalness, primitive recreational opportunities and solitude over the long term.

Private land within the recommended wilderness is not a manageability problem. Two private inholdings are located within the recommended wilderness area. One 120-acre parcel is owned by a livestock operator and is used for stock watering. It is accessed by an existing way and abuts the boundary of the recommended wilderness. Motorized access may be required in the future for maintenance of a stock pond located on the parcel. This would be needed at most, once every few years and more likely once every ten to fifteen years. Access is available to the parcel on the Spencer Creek cherrystemmed road. The second parcel, a 160-acre piece, is located within Little Spencer Basin in the steep core portion of the recommended wilderness area. No developed use has occurred or is expected on the parcel because of its remote location, difficult access, and steep slopes. All other private lands affected by this wilderness designation are located outside the recommended wilderness area at the end of cherrystemmed roads. These parcels are owned by livestock operators and are used for livestock watering. Access to these parcels exists over the cherrystemmed roads. Vehicle traffic to the parcels would be infrequent and would not significantly affect wilderness qualities on adjacent lands.

There would be no expected manageability problems due to mineral claim development within the recommended wilderness area. Five claims filed after October 21, 1976 (post FLPMA claims) are located in the North Fork of Wendel Canyon at the end of a cherrystemmed road. No development is expected. The material, perlite, is considered sub-economic because the market value would not cover removal and transportation costs.

No manageability problems are expected from geothermal development. Geothermal development of the 830 acres of land within the Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA), located within the recommended wilderness area is not expected because of low resource potential, rugged terrain and alternate sites of equal or higher potential located outside the recommended suitable area where terrain is more accessible and development costs would be lower. The 16,940 acres of area considered prospectively valuable for geothermal within the recommended wilderness area is considered to have lower potential than the KGRA and is not expected to be developed.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

#### D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of information known at the time of preliminary suitable recommendation: The geology and mineralization of the Skedaddle WSA is described in the Unit Resource Analysis (URA) based on data in Mineral Resource Inventory (MRI) files (1979-1980) for the BLM Cal-Neva Planning Unit. The URA was updated in August of 1980. It states that the area's past mineral production has been limited to small sales of sand and gravel along the southern boundary of the



WSA, and prospecting and limited testing of perlite deposits. The WSA also includes portions of the Wendel-Amedee Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA), an area considered potentially valuable for geothermal resources. The geothermal potential determination was based on U.S. Geological Survey Memorandum of March 16, 1979 "Leasable Mineral Information, Cal-Neva Planning Unit" (no specific reference as to high, moderate or low). Geothermal resources from wells drilled outside the WSA are currently being used for the generation of electric power approximately eight miles to the west. The potential for occurrence of oil and gas in the WSA was unknown in 1980.

BLM data in the Affected Environment section of the Eagle Lake-Cedarville EIS in 1987 indicated that the WSA has potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources, an unknown potential for oil and gas, and low potential for commercial production of salable minerals. Exploration has taken place for locatable minerals, but early prospecting has not resulted in economic development. Although portions of the Wendel-Amedee KGRA lie within the boundary of the WSA, most of the 830 acres occur on steep, inaccessible terrain on the Wendel Cliffs portion of the Amedee Mountains. The rugged terrain has discouraged onsite development and there has been no interest in developing the resource from an offsite location. As of May 20, 1987 BLM records identified nine placer mining claims in the WSA. Seven of the nine claims fall within the suitable portion.

2. Summary of significant new mineral resource data collected since suitability recommendation which should be considered in the final recommendation: In 1985 and 1986, respectively, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines conducted mineral surveys of the suitable portion of the Skedaddle WSA. The results of the mineral surveys were published in 1988 in open file report USGS Bulletin 1706-C. The U.S. Bureau of Mines collected a total of 201 rock samples and 28 alluvial and placer samples. Of these, 141 rock samples were collected at prospects and mining claims. Thirty of the remaining 60 were collected at mineralized sites, and 30 were collected as reference samples at unmineralized rock sites. Five of the 28 alluvial samples were collected on placer claims (Munts and Peters 1987). Based on geologic and geochemical evidence it was determined that areas within the Skedaddle Wilderness Study Area have high to moderate potential for the occurrence of silver, gold, mercury, and antimony metallic deposits. As shown on Map 2, the central part of the Spencer Basin, upper Thousand Springs Canyon, and the south fork of Wendel Canyon have high mineral resource potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, mercury, and antimony while the area surrounding these locations has moderate mineral resource potential for the same metals. An area in Wendel Canyon has high potential for perlite, and an adjacent area to the south has low mineral potential for the same commodity. The southwestern corner of the WSA has moderate resource potential for geothermal energy and much

of the western half of the study area has low potential for geothermal energy. There is no oil or gas resource potential in the study area (USGS Bulletin 1706-C). The sand and gravel deposits along the south and west perimeter of the WSA have been used in the past, but similar deposits closer to local markets are meeting current needs.

New USGS data indicates the WSA is currently underlain by a thermal system that is responsible for the geothermal potential. Scott and Miller (1983) and Scott (1983) also concluded that the area has no resource potential for oil and gas because of the thin sedimentary section there.

Between 1980 and December 1987, there was little or no known mineral exploration activity in the WSA. A Plan of Operation was submitted for proposed development of the post-FLPMA perlite claims in Wendel Canyon in August 1987. The proposed activity as outlined in the plan was determined to be impairing. Based on BLM's assessment of the low reclamation potential for the area, the plan was not approved. Current mineral interests in the WSA are indicated by no oil and gas or geothermal leases. Table 4 lists the BLM mining claim records as of January 13, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NO.			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Mining Claims						
Lode	0	0	0	0	0	0
Placer	5	0	5	200	0	200
Mill Sites	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	5	200	0	200

All of the active (post-FLPMA) claims remaining in the suitable portion of the WSA are for Perlite located in the upper portion of Wendel Canyon, an area defined as having high potential for the occurrence of Perlite (USGS Bulletin 1706-C).



## E. Impacts on Resources

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION NO-WILDERNESS/ NO ACTION	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO-WILDERNESS ACTION ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	<p>Naturalness reduced on 10 acres due to range improvements in wilderness portion.</p> <p>Solitude in wilderness portion would improve with closure of 8 miles of ways.</p> <p>Naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation would be adversely impacted on up to 7,000 acres in non-wilderness area by powerline construction in proposed utility corridor.</p> <p>Geothermal development could impact naturalness and solitude on up to 500 acres in the non-wilderness portion.</p>	<p>Naturalness reduced on 10 acres due to range improvements.</p> <p>Solitude improved by closure of 47 miles of ways and elimination of 4,200 visitor days of vehicle recreation.</p> <p>There would be some illegal OHV use on the perimeter of the area as no natural barriers exist.</p>	<p>Naturalness reduced on 10 acres due to range improvements in the wilderness portion.</p> <p>Solitude in wilderness portion would improve with closure of 11 miles of ways.</p> <p>Naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation would be adversely impacted on up to 17,000 acres in non-wilderness area if both powerlines were constructed in two proposed utility corridors. Geothermal development could impact naturalness and solitude on up to 780 acres in the non-wilderness portion.</p>	<p>Naturalness reduced on 10 acres due to range improvements.</p> <p>Naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation would be adversely impacted on up to 17,000 acres if both powerlines are constructed in the 2 proposed utility corridors.</p> <p>Geothermal development could impact naturalness and solitude on up to 500 acres.</p>
Mineral Resource Development	No significant impact in 37,339 acres designated wilderness area due to low mineral potential.	Negligible impact due to low mineral potential of the area.	No significant impact in 24,644 acres designated wilderness area due to low mineral potential.	No impact as area would be open for minerals. Low potential does not indicate any development will occur.

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION NO-WILDERNESS/ NO ACTION	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO-WILDERNESS ACTION ALTERNATIVE
Mineral Resource Development (Cont'd)	Non-wilderness on 25,574 acres available but low mineral potential means activity not likely.		Non-wilderness on 38,546 acres available but low mineral potential means activity not likely.	
Recreational OHV Use	Wilderness designation would close 8 miles of ways. Very little impact as 39 mi. of ways are open and the existing 4,200 visitor days of OHV use would occur in the non-wilderness portion.	Loss of 4,200 visitor-days of recreation vehicle use as 47 miles of ways and 15 miles of road would be closed.	Wilderness designation would close 11 miles of ways. Very little impact as 36 miles of ways are open and the existing 4,200 visitor days of OHV use would use the non-wilderness portion.	No impact as existing 47 miles of ways would be open. Use is not expected to increase much beyond present 4,200 visitor-days.
Geothermal Resource Development	Geothermal resource development on 1,040 acres of the Wendel/Amedee KGRA and 16,940 acres of prospectively valuable for geothermal area within the WSA would be foregone. Impact is minimal due to low potential and rugged terrain. The remaining 500 acres of the KGRA and 4,600 acres of prospectively valuable for geothermal area within the WSA would be available for development.	Geothermal resource development on 1,540 acres of Wendel/Amedee KGRA and 21,540 acres of prospectively valuable geothermal area within the WSA would be foregone. Impact is considered minimal due to low potential and rugged terrain.	Geothermal resource development on 760 acres of the Wendel/Amedee KGRA and 14,380 acres of prospective valuable for geothermal area within the WSA would be foregone. Impact is minimal due to low potential and rugged terrain. The remaining 780 acres of the KGRA and 7,160 acres of prospectively valuable for geothermal area within the WSA would be available for development.	No impact on Geothermal resource development.



Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION NO-WILDERNESS/ NO ACTION	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO-WILDERNESS ACTION ALTERNATIVE
Trans Sierra Utility Corridor	No impact on 7 mi. of high priority alignment through the non-designated area. 4 miles of a 10-mile segment of low priority alignment could not be built through the designated area.	No development of 7 miles of high priority potential utility line would occur through the WSA.	No impact on 7 miles of high priority or 10 miles of low priority alignment through the non-designated area.	No impact on 2 segments of potential Trans Sierra Utility corridor alignments. Either the 7-mile portion of a high priority alignment or the 10-mile portion of a low-priority alignment could be developed.
Private Waters	No significant change in impact as wilderness use would replace some of the vehicle use presently taking place.	Trespass on private water sources on inholdings would decline.	No significant change in impact as wilderness use would replace some of the vehicle use presently taking place.	No change in present situations where during hunting season trespass on springs on private inholdings occurs.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

Lassen County and Sierra Army Depot expressed concern during development of the wilderness study of the WSA and through comments on the draft wilderness EIS that wilderness designation of the Skedaddle WSA is incompatible with operations of the adjacent depot demolition facility. Both Lassen County and the Sierra Army Depot stated that constraints on the operation of the Sierra Army Depot could result from wilderness designation which could have serious adverse impacts to the economy of Lassen County through reduction in the number of people working at the base.

The Sierra Army Depot is the single largest civilian employer in Lassen County and any restriction of Depot operations could have impacts on both the capability of the Depot to carry out its mission and on the number of civilians employed at the base.

According to the response submitted by the Sierra Army Depot to the draft wilderness EIS, Sierra Army Depot is the only military facility in the country where large scale (up to 10,000 lbs. of TNT) open-air demolition activities are authorized to occur. BLM recommends that Congress review the situation concerning the proximity of the Sierra Army Depot during review of legislation and make findings that would allow the continuing and potential expansion of operations on the Sierra Army Depot.

G. Summary of - WSA Specific Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Comments were used to develop significant study issues and alternatives.

A Technical Review Team (TRT) was used to help identify issues and formulate the alternatives analyzed in the EIS. It was used as a tool to lessen the chances of polarization between interest groups and to provide the Bureau with high quality public input representative of the positions of key groups interested in or affected by wilderness designation. Input provided by the TRT was used in developing the WSA's wilderness recommendation.

For the Eagle Lake-Cedarville Wilderness EIS that included the Skedaddle Mountain WSA, the Susanville District Advisory Council identified the following interests and resources to be represented on an eight member TRT: livestock-adjacent land owners; wildlife-agencies-sportsmen; energy-utilities, wild horses; motorized recreation; cultural-historical-archeological; wilderness and dispersed recreation; Bureau of Land Management. The representatives were knowledgeable and highly respected members of their interest groups. The TRT members toured the WSA, held lengthy discussions spanning many weeks and eventually reached unanimous agreement that a partial-wilderness recommendation was appropriate for the WSA. The team's recommendation of 60% suitable and 40% non-suitable was supported by the Susanville District Advisory Council and by BLM and is the recommended action for this WSA.

Key issues raised through public involvement and analyzed by the TRT and in the wilderness EIS were: impact of wilderness designation on activities of Sierra Army Depot (see Section F., Local Social and Economic Considerations for a discussion of this issue); high quality wilderness values in the Skedaddle WSA; a wilderness complex where five adjacent WSA's separated only by boundary roads including Skedaddle WSA would be managed as a wilderness complex inclusive of the road (this was analyzed in the all-wilderness alternative of the EIS); concern that wilderness would prevent potential mineral and geothermal development, livestock management activities and motorized recreation access for hunting; concern that wilderness would limit management of wild horses and burro populations; concern that wilderness would preclude development of potential high voltage, electric transmission lines through the region. All of these issues were addressed in each of the four alternatives analyzed in the EIS, all wilderness, partial wilderness proposed action (60% wilderness, 40% nonwilderness), partial wilderness (39% wilderness, 61% nonwilderness) and no wilderness.

During formal public review of the draft EIS a total of 361 comments were received that addressed this WSA specifically or as part of general comments on all WSA's in the draft EIS. Of those 361 comments, 13 were oral statements received at three public hearings held on the draft EIS and 348 were written comments. In general, 62 commenters



supported all-wilderness, 11 supported no-wilderness and 76 supported partial-wilderness recommended by BLM. Another 212 commenters supported more wilderness than was addressed in the draft EIS.

Those favoring wilderness cited the Skedaddle Mountains' high quality wilderness values. Particular mention was made of the area's rugged topography, many peaks, ridges and canyons that afford excellent opportunities for exploration and challenging primitive recreation. Riparian areas, numerous springs and aspen groves were also cited as enhancing the natural character of the area. Respondents also emphasized the area's diversity of wildlife with particular emphasis given to the large populations of nesting raptors that afford excellent opportunities for viewing birds of prey, particularly golden eagles.

Respondents opposed to wilderness designation in the Skedaddle WSA cited adverse impacts to solitude and naturalness from activities at the Sierra Army Depot's ammunition demolition facility adjacent to the WSA's south flank. Concern was expressed by both Sierra Army Depot and Lassen County that wilderness designation of lands within Skedaddle WSA could impose restrictions on operations at Sierra Army Depot which in turn would limit the capability of the depot to carry out its mission. Lassen County and the depot stated that any reduction in depot operations would have adverse effects on Lassen County's economy because of the large number of civilian employees at the depot.

Other comments against wilderness cited restrictions that wilderness designation would cause on popular roads for hunter access. Restriction or prohibition of exploration and development of the area's geothermal resources was mentioned by commenters who do not want the area designated as wilderness. Livestock operators who use the area cited concern that, despite livestock's grandfathered provisions in the wilderness act, livestock management activities, particularly motorized access for water facility inspection and maintenance and sheep camp movement, would be restricted. Restrictions or prohibition on development of new water facilities, springs, and stock ponds, was also cited as reasons for opposition to wilderness. Others opposed to wilderness cited the elimination of possible mineral development in designated wilderness as a general reason to oppose wilderness designation.

Responses to the proposed action/partial-wilderness of the wilderness EIS by local and state agency and elected officials varied. California Department of Fish and Game supported the proposed action as did Nevada County (California) Supervisor Joel Gustavson. Lassen County Board of Supervisors supported no-wilderness. Washoe County did not submit comments.

Letters were received from two State agencies and five Federal agencies that took no positions as to a recommendation on alternatives or acreage to be preserved as wilderness. They were the California Dept. of Water Resources, Nevada Division of Historic Preservation, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS and the Environmental Protection Agency.



APPENDIX 1  
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN  
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION  
SKEDADDLE WSA (CA-020-612)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	29N.	16E.	23	MDM	160	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	24.0	2.5

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These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.